

REINCARNATION

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THE WAR AND THE CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

The mills of the Gods grind slowly, but they grind exceeding fine. No conception of the exactness of this ancient truth equals that which our knowledge of the continuity, the method and the Law of our lives can give us. Round and round the quern is turning. What is joy to-day makes pain to-morrow. What is pain to-day means lessons learned and joy of knowledge. So the ripened grain is turned to flour.

Men do not at once leap into god-head. The Christ is born in the lowly manger, in obscure Bethlehem. This we celebrate at Christmas-time. And, for the great baby-world, the inner Christ is still but a tiny embryo. The world-war is but part of the great quern—it is the rounded stone that is grinding the wheat grains that are poured into the rock-bowl of the ancient mill.

Why does the mill grind so slowly? Why must the quern be opened so often for the wind to

blow out the husks and why then the turning be so patiently renewed? It is that men shall learn the Law—they must first feel its actuality; then know it; then understand it. And why not know it and understand it without so much of grinding?

Strange it is! Listen! If they would but accept the Law in thought and constantly try to understand it, the grinding soon would end. Then would the product of our evolving swiftly return again perfected to the Lord of sowing and of harvesting.

W. V-H.

TOLERANCE

What matters it what faith or creed
My brother holds,

If it to him through thought or deed
The truth unfolds?

What matters it what name he bears,
If on Life's way of pain and cares
He bears the sign?

For his own soul must learn the right,
And his own eyes must see the light—
Not mine nor thine.

The same sun shines on all men's ways,
And chooses none.

How should I think he spreads his rays
On mine alone?

The life eternal dwells in all
The germs of power;

How shall I then pronounce his doom
When in my brother's heart may bloom
The holy flower?

Library Bulletin (Iowa).

REINCARNATION*

Darwin's theory of the evolution of form, broached some fifty years ago, and now generally accepted in the world of science, has paved the way for the re-introduction in the West of the teaching of Reincarnation, or the evolution of the human soul. I say "re-introduction" for in the early Christian Church the doctrine of pre-existence was so widespread that one particular form of it was condemned at a Council in the seventh Century; and references to it may be found in many of the writings of the early Church Fathers.

Its omission from the teachings of the Church has contributed much to the growth of atheism, for it deprived humanity of the knowledge of its chief reason for existence upon this earth—the evolution of the soul. The doctrine of special creation has resulted in the majority of people identifying themselves with their physical bodies to such an extent that they are unable to think of themselves apart from them. Many of them regard the Resurrection as the gathering together of their physical bones and a new semi-physical body being built up on this foundation; and to them death seems terrible in its shattering of all that is known as themselves. No thinking person can accept the justice of being condemned to hell or exalted to heaven as a result of a few years' experience of earth life. This doctrine is as unacceptable by the intellect as it is repugnant

*Notes of a lecture by a member of the Oxford Group (England) of the *Karma and Reincarnation Legion*.

to our sense of justice, for it does nothing to explain the host of inequalities and the innumerable disadvantages of life. It makes of existence one huge lottery—some drawing the prizes of intellect, beauty and health and others the blanks of disease, idiocy and criminality.

Deep down, however, in the human heart there has persisted a belief in the justice and compassion of the Creator, in spite of the doctrines which would imply the opposite, and now, with the return of the teaching of Reincarnation, has come the confirmation of our belief in the divine ordering of things. The veil is lifted and the law is revealed which governs our lives, and with this knowledge the demands of our intellect are appeased and our sense of justice satisfied. For we realise that every human spirit enters into life in an embryonic state and must develop through the experiences which earth life affords. From pleasant and painful events man gets the materials which he builds into mental and moral faculties. No longer can we regard as unfair the showering upon one child of "gifts," which are withheld from another, for the "gifted" person has worked hard for the faculties with which he is born. Those who do not possess these qualities are the younger ones who have not toiled through so many earth lives as their elder brothers. But the same powers are within them both—budding in the one and flowering in the other. The savage of to-day only needs time to become the saint of the future. Life with all its forces will play upon him, moulding him life by life into a greater likeness of the Perfect Man.

With the knowledge that there is no such thing

as luck—that our whole lives are governed by Law—we recognise that the making of our future selves is within our own hands; that to-day we can start consciously building into our characters those noble qualities which we recognise as desirable and laying the foundation for those fine capacities which we have hitherto regarded as “gifts” from the Creator. This teaching places within man’s hand the power for which he has longed. He is no more the plaything of Chance, buffeted by all the forces of the universe, with no prop to sustain him save the “Will of God.” He is “a god in the making,” with a goal onward through the ages, undying, eternal, growing in wisdom and love, until the Plan conceived by the Great Architect of the Universe is complete.

D. J.



Do not allow impulses to guide conduct. Enthusiasm belongs to feeling, not to conduct. Enthusiasm in conduct has no place in real Occultism, for the Occultist must be always self-contained. One of the most difficult things in the life of the Occultist is to hold the balance evenly, and this power comes from real spiritual insight. The Occultist has to live more an inner than an outer life. He feels, realises, knows, more and more, but shows less and less. Even the sacrifices he has to make belong more to the inner world than to the outer. In ordinary religious devotion all the sacrifice and strength one’s nature is capable of are used in adhering to externals, and in overcoming ridicule and temptations on the physical plane. But these have to be used for grander objects in the life of the Occultist. Proportion must be considered, and the external subordinated.

From “The Doctrine of the Heart.”

MEMORY AND REINCARNATION

The writer does not hope to say anything new on this subject; the most that he can attempt is to put a little old wine into something resembling a new bottle. First, what does reincarnation mean? Put simply, it means a return to physical life, time after time, again and yet again, in order to complete old lessons and to begin new ones. It means taking up the pursuit of knowledge with a new body and fresh surroundings. Humanity's common every-day teacher is its every-day experience. When, broadly speaking, the race has learned all that experience in association with physical bodies and physical surroundings can teach through these, then, and not till then, "heaven and earth will pass away." Human beings, having transcended humanity, will pass on to a higher evolution, untrammelled by the restrictions of the physical system. Having become even as the gods, its new evolution will be along the line of an individualised divinity evolved from individualised humanity.

One of the frequent questions put by those to whom reincarnation is a new idea, is, "How comes it, if we have lived previous lives, that we do not remember anything about them?" One answer to this is that some people do remember, but the answer is unsatisfying, because this is an assertion which you cannot prove to the ordinary man. A man may say he remembers, but where is the proof that he is not inventing—that he is not simply romancing,—or that he is not the willing victim of some pleasing mnemonic delusion—of some impish prank played by the

mythic Mnemosyne, the ancient goddess of memory. The answer may be a true answer—I believe it is—but it will be no answer to the honest and analytic sceptic.

Another reply is that, by a long and arduous course of training an individual can develop his memory of past lives on earth. This reply has no convincing force: the man in the street does not want to be told to find out for himself by commencing a process which it may take two or three lives to complete.

All that the writer will attempt to do in this brief article is to indicate that the fact that we do not remember incidents of past lives does not provide any strong argument against the theory of reincarnation. Suppose we put a question, thus: "If I do not remember one thousandth part of the things I have done and seen and heard and felt in this life, is it reasonable to expect that I should have a clear recollection, or any recollection at all, of what took place a long while ago in other lives, lived in entirely different bodies?"

Personally I doubt that I could use my own memory to recall one millionth part of the daily and hourly experiences of a long life, and yet some psychologists tell me that every incident, every word I ever heard or spoke, however trivial, is stored up in my present memory. Only a small portion of the content of that memory is normally available, but the whole is there. This contention may be illustrated by a well-known story. An illiterate servant girl became ill, and in her illness she continually spoke Hebrew, and, more than that, it was an archaic form of Hebrew, studied only by a few scholars. Her case was regarded

as miraculous; but a young doctor was sure there must be a rational explanation. He traced the girl's history and found that she had been at one time in the service of an old Hebrew scholar. The old man would walk up and down in the corridor, and the girl at her work would hear him reading aloud, or talking to himself in the archaic Hebrew above mentioned. Although she did not understand a word, and the sounds were meaningless to her, yet they were automatically recorded on the tablets of her memory; and when she was in an abnormal condition through illness these tablets began to talk through her with the precision of a phonograph.

By analogy a possible conclusion arises out of this, namely, that the incidents of past lives may be recorded in our memory of to-day, although we are wholly unconscious of the fact. We can not touch the chord that will resound to those memories, but, given certain conditions, the chord may be made to resound all the same; and that without any conscious effort on our own part. One thing is clear: that the normal man, in his normal state, has no recollection of past existences, but cases are fairly numerous in which vague memories appear to be stirred, which can not be accounted for in any ordinary way.

Another point which goes against the probability of our remembering past lives is found in the fact that our physical wide-awake brain can not act except through the medium of our present brain. The memories of past lives have to be brought to us through a new brain and a new body which had no part in experiencing the incidents themselves. It seems reasonable that this

would interpose a physiological difficulty, making it very hard to bring the recollection through.

Another point may be mentioned. Would it be wise or desirable in the scheme of things that the brain, or the mind of the present should be burdened with the memories of many previous lives. There must have been a very great number of very sad happenings in the experience of us all. Is it not better for our efficiency that we should not be burdened with a great load of useless and depressing recollections, brought over from past existences? Taking even our present existence, is it not a wise provision that we remember so little,—that the memory even of a prolonged period of physical or mental suffering eventually becomes thin and shadowy, like a dream?

Have I said enough to show that the lack of recollection of past lives is not necessarily an argument against the theory of reincarnation? If I have, my humble purpose is achieved.

John Hawkes.

[Of course, the simple fact that our present brains and in fact not only our physical bodies but our bodies of feelings and emotions and our bodies for thinking concrete thoughts, are new and belong only to the present life, at once completely settles the question of why ordinary men do not remember their past lives. The case of the servant girl illustrates how completely normal men depend on their brains for memory. It was only when her body was ill and the brain probably somewhat deranged in its proper functioning that the girl was able to come into touch with the Hebrew. Yet this memory was personal. *Eds.*]

*REMEMBERS BEING BURNED AT STAKE**

Mrs. M. E. W. Wright, born May 31, 1829 at Stratford, Connecticut, was living near the home of the Rev. Mr. Phelps at New Haven, Conn., when in 1848 it was the scene of supernormal phenomena, said by the perpetrators to be in ridicule of the materialism of the Church. She was skeptical then, but became convinced of the genuineness of those and similar manifestations, and later joined the organised body of Spiritualists. In 1914 she was at a meeting of spiritualists in Los Angeles, California, when the subject of reincarnation was being violently discussed, and for the first time in her life announced that she knew of a former earth embodiment, saying: "If you had ever been burnt at the stake you would remember it. That's what happened to me."

About a year after that meeting she was called upon to give such details as she could regarding her asserted previous incarnation, for the benefit of those who cared to hear. She said that the memory of it had been distinct since earliest childhood, but being of a timid disposition, and ridiculed by her family for her seemingly fantastic views, she had kept it secret until compelled to speak of it in defense of reincarnation as a fact well known to her.

Her story runs as follows:

"It was in England or France. I was a young lady of good reputation, except that I could sense a wider range of affairs than could those around me, and to the orthodox of whom I seemed un-

*Contributed by Cornett T. Stark, of Los Angeles, Cal.

canny. I prophesied events, and for that I was tried in some kind of a court on the charge of witchcraft, was condemned to death, and put in a very horrible jail. When the time for the execution came, I was brought in chains to a pile of wood in a public place, and fastened by means of the chains to a post in the midst of it.

"The priests were my chief persecutors, and they then tried to make me kiss a cross which one of them held up to me, but I would not do so. If I were to meet any one of a certain three of them, I would recognise him no matter what his guise might be. One, a very large priest, lighted a torch and held it to the fuel under me. I could see that the younger priests were sorry for me, and many women in the crowd were crying, but the slow roasting began and I braced myself against the pain, resolved to show no breaking down.

"Angelic beings became visible to me, and I asked them to help me bear the pain without giving the priests the satisfaction of hearing a sound from me. The angels staid close by and encouraged me until the flames became high, when I swallowed one and felt no more suffering. I passed out of my body and went with my spirit companions. It is impossible to forget, and when I hear people say there is no reincarnation or re-embodiment on earth, I know that is merely their opinion. When I come back again I will still remember, and I hope I will be better equipped for teaching it to all."

Mary E. W. Wright.

THE VALUE OF KNOWING THE TRUTH

Those who understand something of karma and reincarnation are very often asked the question, "What real good can one get out of this knowledge?" Of course it is always with a sense of sadness that one hears the question put in this way. It shows a selfishness that disappoints. It is hard to believe that there is nothing so great or sacred, but that in taking up the subject it must be approached from the standpoint of "Where do I get off?" The reward must be in sight before the work is begun. "If there's nothing in it for me personally, what's the use?" Yet this question must be answered satisfactorily or the subject may be forever dismissed by the inquirer.

Of course we all know that it would take volumes to answer it in even a partly complete way.

Here is one answer that can be given with much satisfaction:

This great family of human souls came to earth for the purpose of making a certain development, or for development along certain lines. Perhaps we could say that these souls came here to learn certain lessons, and that one teacher was appointed to guide them. His name is "Experience," and all knowledge that can be obtained must come through him. He is a very hard and exacting teacher, and when "night comes" after some of our "days at school" (incarnations), we feel decidedly "the worse for wear." Still we *must* go to school, as there is no easy way to play "hookey." So, comfortably or uncomfortably, happily or unhappily, through pain and pleasure,

—perhaps some could say, through toil and suffering—we get our “education.” Possibly the thought could be better illustrated by saying that each soul has before it a journey which it *must* make. Say that the journey is from down “Broadway” (it *is* a broad-way) from Forty-Second Street to the Battery. Now for certain reasons, before that Soul starts on its journey *it is blind-folded*, but its face is turned in the right direction and it is told to *go*. What happens? First it falls off the sidewalk into the gutter. It picks itself up and starts on, then runs its head into a lamp-post. It staggers back, only to make a wreck of a woman coming behind with a baby and a bunch of bundles. It gets its “blessing” and steers straight for a man with a ladder. After a few “rounds” have been extracted from his anatomy a policeman leads him off in “chains,” (which is, of course, evolutionary).

By the time the poor soul gets to the end of its journey it has learned many things, but at what a cost in time, in suffering, and all the time in a wonderment of “Why must it make the journey, and what for?”

Now comes our answer:

Those Great Beings who have charge of the development of this great family of human souls are our Elder Brothers. They have gone through this same development step by step. They know by *experience* just what their younger brothers are suffering. They know just how long and hard that journey is. Their hearts are for this reason filled with compassion, and so they are, through the knowledge of karma and reincarnation, in a measure, offering to take the “blind-

fold" from the eyes of those who will see. They are giving the opportunity to the brother to know something of this great Plan for his development. They give him a glimpse of the journey he must make, the reason for it, and then tell him how to make it without getting hurt so many times. If the little brother will listen and heed the words of information, instruction and advice, he will not only make the "journey" in infinitely less time but can do so in the light of *knowledge* instead of *experience*.

He can *know*, and, because he knows, he can take a hand in the "great work." He will not have to ask "where he gets off." He will forget the selfish part and turn with a helping hand toward *his* brother.

A. E. Landon.



The thought of most people is self-centered, and the world is full of an ocean of self-centered thought from millions of people. That is where the value of your thinking comes in. The higher part of your mental body belongs to the causal—but below that you start—setting in motion the higher order of mental matter. It is only when you take these high subjects and try to put your best intellectual effort into them that vibrations are set in motion which stimulate the higher mental bodies of the mass of the people. It will not necessarily lead them to think along your lines, but it will stimulate and help them to use their higher mental faculties.

C. W. Leadbeater.

REINCARNATIONS OF THE CHRIST

One of the simple and reasonable teachings of reincarnation is that the great egos, or souls of men, who are the leaders of humanity in any branch of learning, have also been great men in the past. They have had more earthly lives and gathered more experience than the men from the ordinary mass of humanity. They are the great Teachers and Elder Brothers of the human race. They are helping to guide the affairs of the world, not so much by any great visible changes, but rather by silently and continually exerting gentle pressures, sometimes perhaps for many centuries, on the worlds of thought and feeling in which live the younger human egos and by which they are profoundly influenced and changed in the course of the thousands of years which pass by. Thus men are being helped and guided along the better ways of life and thought by influences that are unseen but of very potent reality and force.

Just as men specialise in some limited field of learning or endeavor, so the greater egos have chosen for themselves definite lines of work in the great Plan of human evolution, the Plan which works with such majestic slowness but with such utter certitude, through the Law of Karma. They, too, specialise, in order that the concentration of their efforts may lead to larger results, and that the energies of the world may be most wisely and efficiently used. Thus some of the leaders of our humanity have been in many lives great teachers and founders of religions, while others have done vast labors in science, in philosophy, in the arts, in commerce, in statesmanship and in the many

difficult problems of legislation and government.

Assuredly the great ego whom Western men know as The Christ, has lived many times on this earth as a great teacher of religion or high priest of the church. There are some fragments of information regarding Him and some of His incarnations of the distant past, and some of these fragments are to be collected here, as far as it is possible to do so, for the help they may give to other students of reincarnation. The various sources of information have been carefully selected and are regarded as of high authority and trustworthiness by many advanced students. The fragments are to be given, however, on their own merits, each for itself, and may be taken by students for what they may seem to be worth to them. An attempt will be made to indicate each source of information as it is made use of, and to give an appreciation of its nature and its value to our study of the lives of this Great Ego.

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It is a fact that the ancient scriptures of the far East possess much more information about the past history and work of The Christ than does Christianity itself. The great Being who appeared as The Christ and founded the religion known as Christianity, is as well known to some of the very ancient Indian sacred books as is the great founder of the Buddhist religion, the Lord Gautama Buddha, who lived and taught some five or six hundred years before the time of the Christian era. Thus the One who became The Christ was known in ancient Hindu books under the name of the Rishi Maitreya. The word

"Rishi" means a sage in spiritual wisdom, and the word "Maitreya" signifies Love and Compassion. The word "Buddha" does not refer to any individual human being, but to a spiritual office or rather a certain exalted rank of spiritual attainment. The Buddha is "the Enlightened One," or He who has attained the powers of self-consciousness in the world of pure Will, Nirvana. The "Bodhisattva" is the rank immediately preceding that of the Buddha, and a Bodhisattva is one who is to become a Buddha some time in the future. A Bodhisattva may live a number of lives in that rank of spiritual attainment, but that incarnation on earth in which he attains Buddhahood and becomes The Buddha is His last life in human flesh and form.

A beautiful ancient tradition found in Indian books tells something of these two mighty human beings, the One who became The Buddha and the One who is now the Bodhisattva. The story is exquisitely told in the little book, *Christ and Buddha*, written by Mr. C. Jinarajadasa. The quotations are from the first story. It should be explained that Devas are Angels, and that Manus are Divine Rulers, beings who have attained to a high rank in the spiritual Hierarchy which is governing the worldly affairs of humanity.

The Resolve

Long, long ago there lived on earth a noble and brave man, by name Sumedha. In those days there moved among men a Wonderful Being, a Buddha. He was called the Buddha Dipankara. One day the Buddha and his saints were coming to a certain city. The people of the city were joyful at his coming, and everything was done to make the city beautiful. The roads were swept and sprinkled, the trees hung with flags, and everything

was made to look brave. Sumedha joined in this work, for he, too, knew what a glorious person a Buddha is, and wanted to show his reverence. Sumedha had a part of the road to level, and sweep and decorate, but when the Buddha came his work was not all done, and there was one big puddle in the middle of the road, that the Buddha would have to go through. Sumedha would not permit such a thing, and so he lay face down in the mud, so that the Buddha might walk over his body to the other side. And as he thus lay down he said to himself, "May I some day be a Buddha like Buddha Dipankara; may I, also, some day save the world!"

The Buddha walked over his body, and then stopped, and looked at Sumedha on the ground. Then he looked far into the future with the vision of a Buddha, and saw that ages thence Sumedha would have his aspiration fulfilled and would live on earth as a Buddha, the Buddha Gautama. So he spoke to Sumedha and the others round him and said, "This Sumedha is a future Buddha, and one day he will be a Buddha, and will save the world."

The Nomination

After the Resolve, many, many ages passed by. Many Buddhas came and spoke their Message, each in his turn giving over to his successor the spiritual welfare of the world. But all these Buddhas were not of us. There was none then among men who could take that exalted office, and so the Buddhas came to us from far off Venus and the Devas. But time was coming when men should do their work unaided, when its Buddhas and Manus should be the flowers of this our humanity. Who should be the first Buddha, the first great Flower on our human tree?

In those days two only among the millions of men stood towering above them in might of grace and love—Sumedha and Another. In later days we know them as Gautama and Maitreya, Buddha and Christ. Great as They were then, yet neither was ready to qualify for the office at the proper time, surely humanity would suffer. Yet it seemed almost impossible to qualify in time, so much was there to do, so little time to do it in.

Then, little Flower, for love of you and me, and

millions like us, the Lord Buddha made the determination that, cost what it may, He would force His evolution, so that when the time came for a Buddha to appear to comfort men's hearts, the world might not go unaided. Life after life He toiled, undertaking a super-human task; so great was His renunciation, so stupendous His achievement, that even the greatest of Adepts, little Flower, speak in awe and love and reverence of the love He bore us, that made Him sacrifice Himself thus for our sakes. So of the two, on the same level of advancement long ago, One, Gautama, took the Nomination, while the Other, Maitreya, came with Him each step of the way as His chief helper.

The Consummation

Two thousand six hundred years ago, Sumedha moved among men as a Buddha of Humanity. That birth of His was in India, and men called Him for a while Prince Siddhârtha of the Gotama clan; but when His work was consummated, and He reached Buddhahood, He called Himself Samana Gotama the Tathâgata. For eighty years He lived among men, that last of many times; for forty-five years He preached and taught, loving His fellow-men dearer than a mother loves her only child. To each He spoke suited to his understanding; to priests and scholars in deep terms of philosophy, to Chatta, the little boy, in boyish verses for him to sing.

When the time came for Him, the Buddha, to pass away, He left that form, never again to return to body born of woman; and on leaving, He gave into the hands of His successor, Maitreya, Lord of Compassion, Christ the Anointed, your welfare and mine, little Flower, and of the other sixty thousand millions that form our humanity.

The Present

Though the Great Buddha passed away, and the Christ then took the Nomination, yet He did not leave us altogether and enter into the glorious life of Nirvana. One greater Renunciation there yet remained for Him to make, and for our sakes He made it. "On the threshold of Nirvana" He is waiting, little Flower, till you and I and many other thousands can accompany Him, till He can enter rejoicing, bringing His sheaves with Him.

On the threshold He waits, these many centuries, giving to the Lord Maitreya and His agents, to be used for our sakes, His love of us which is power untold.

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Another valuable source of information is the series of articles by Mr. C. W. Leadbeater, which were published serially in *The Theosophist* in the years 1910 and 1911, under the title "The Lives of Alcyone." This material is the result of many painstaking investigations in which a higher, or spiritual, form of vision is used. These articles are of very great value in giving information on the workings of karmic law throughout many successive lives.

In the "Lives of Alcyone" names of stars are chiefly used to refer to human egos living in various personalities. The name given to the ego who became The Christ is Surya (Sun), while similarly Mahaguru (great Teacher) refers to the One who became the first Buddha of our own humanity.

The first "life" of Alcyone which is described dates back to some twenty-two thousand years before the Christian era. The family of Alcyone was living in what is now one of the Gulf States of North America, near the Mississippi River. This river then cut across what is now the state of Mississippi, and the Gulf of Mexico was much smaller in size and of different configuration.

At that time there was still a considerable part of the old continent of Atlantis, and Surya was the Head Priest of the Atlantean religion. When on one occasion Surya visited a certain holy city in Yucatan, a small expedition was sent from the Gulf States country to take part in receiving

the august priest. The party travelled over what is now probably Texas and Mexico, with great difficulty, but succeeded in reaching the great temple in time to take part in the ceremonies.

"There was a sort of golden throne, manifoldly decorated; it had lion arms and a flight of nine steps leading up to it with carved animals on either side, something of the Egyptian style of work. Surya sat upon this throne and received the people as they were presented to him, exchanging with each of them certain signs. Each priest, as he appeared before Surya, gave him the same secret salutation which is one of those still used in the White Lodge at the present day. Surya sent out streams of blessing—or perhaps they were sent through him. Afterwards the huge brazen gates of the temple were thrown open, and the rest of the party came in, and Surya came down from his throne to speak with them, saluting them with the most friendly words. . . . Our friends attended also another great gathering on an occasion when Surya spoke to the assembled people. Even then he preached the doctrine of love which is so characteristically his own, telling all the pilgrims the emphasis that must be laid upon that quality.

"'Love is life,' he said, 'the only life that is real. A man who ceases to love is already dead. All conditions in life are to be judged fortunate or unfortunate according to the opportunities that they offer for love. Love will come under the most unlikely circumstances, if men will but allow it to come. Without this all other qualifications are only as water lost in the sand.'"

In the second life of the series Alcyone was born as a girl in Burma in the year 21,759 B. C. Her father, Brihaspati, was both ruler and priest of his small tribe. After a happy childhood:

“At the age of fifteen she was duly married to Saturn with great pomp, and a year later a noble boy was born (Surya). There was great rejoicing over this event, and every care was taken of the child of promise. Alcyone was very sensitive and impressionable, and . . . she was also clairvoyantly conscious of the presence of the Ego when it attached itself to her.

“Everything seemed to promise for her a long and brilliant life under the most favorable conditions; yet all these expectations were disappointed, for her life was abruptly terminated at the age of seventeen by an accident in which she voluntarily sacrificed herself in order to save her child” (from a fire in the house).

“After its mother’s death the child was taken in charge by his aunt, Viraj (Saturn’s sister), . . . She was psychic, and through her Alcyone was still able to help and care for the child. The aunt never allowed any of the servants to touch the baby, and swung him herself in the garden in a sort of cradle hung up between the trees. There, in the quiet grove, Alcyone would astrally speak to her about the child, who was thus brought up altogether in a holy atmosphere and soon became a wonder, at the age of seven delivering teaching in the temple, so that people from all quarters came to hear him.”

At twenty-six Surya sent a religious expedition to the north. Some lost their lives from hardships.

(To be Continued)

THE KARMA OF DEATH IN BATTLE

In a recent number of *The Seeker*, published in Pretoria, South Africa, there is given a "Round Table" discussion of this interesting question: What karma may it be which results in the loss of a soldier's life in battle? Is it necessary to explain this by saying that the soldier had himself taken life in some past incarnation?

Many divergent answers are given by different students, from which the following abstracts or summaries are selected:

The first student holds that "generally speaking the answer would be in the affirmative, that he has taken a life in some previous incarnation and now karma has given him the opportunity of liquidating the debt. In fact . . . karma has now given the opportunity to a great many men to pay off old scores. . . Of course should there be any one who does not really owe a life, he will be more than compensated in the next life."

The next answer points out that "there seems to be a common idea that karma in order to work itself out nicely should always be repeating itself. . . Doubtless every person in the world has taken life in some previous existence. . . but let us hope . . . we have learned enough in most cases . . . to play our part in the national duty and racial karma. . ."

The third answer in full is: "A person who loses his life this incarnation in battle is not in my opinion paying off past personal karma. Murder and killing in battle are two different things—the former is personal, the latter national. When murder is committed, the guilty one is alone responsible, but where lives are lost in war the nation as a whole assumes the responsibility. The fact of a soldier having killed one or a hundred men in battle does not in any way add to the weight of karma except in so far as his soul contributes to the national conscience. War is a national affair and therefore belongs to the department of national karma."

The fourth says: "The motive that animates a true soldier is not the desire to kill but the doing of his duty—that is, the defending of his country against its enemies. Since this is the case it does not seem to me necessary, should he lose his life in battle, that he should have taken the life of another person in a former existence. . . But if the murderer of a former life becomes a soldier he pays his debt by being killed, probably at close quarters, in more or less cold blood. Then, too, the existence of national karma must be taken into consideration, for a nation may have to lose many of its citizens in battle, although individually these citizens need not have been guilty of 'destroying the form' in previous lives."

The fifth student thinks "that the fact of a soldier being killed in battle is not necessarily to be accounted for by his having taken life in some former incarnation." He holds that there is no such hard and fast law in the adjustment of karma, that it is not "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" method, and asks whether it may not be true that for the development of the man and the building into his character of something that it lacked, the sacrifice of his physical life is necessary, not on account of the past but of the future?

The sixth answer points out that the Great Authorities who are consciously guiding evolution probably set no value at all on the body, otherwise than as an instrument by means of which the ego gains experiences, and that each body is the most suitable one possible for the requirements, character and evolution of the ego who lives in the body. It is shown by a number of typical examples that the act of "being killed" may be for various reasons which have to do with the future of the man rather than with his past karma.

The seventh student quotes a very fine definition of karma, as given by H. P. Blavatsky: "We consider it as the ultimate law of the universe, the source, origin and fount of all other laws which exist throughout nature. Karma is the unerring law which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer. Though itself unknowable, its action is perceivable." He believes that the effect

produced may be ascribed to causes in the mental world or even higher worlds of consciousness; in fact, it appears to him "that the cause of all action must necessarily be an activity produced by the mind, itself an effect of some previous and higher cause, the ultimate being the Efficient Cause. If so, it will be seen that one need not have killed another to find oneself involved in the present world-strife." He regards the Efficient Cause "somewhat in the way we do Cosmic Consciousness, that is, the sum total of all consciousness. To react upon the world it would resolve itself into a mode of action and impinge the mind of such as may be susceptible to its action. That would be their karma, having made themselves susceptible by their own actions."

It will be seen that the majority of the answers hold that it is not necessary for the man to have taken a human life in the past in order to lose his life in battle. The various points which are suggested are extremely interesting, and it seems quite likely that all of them contain truth. It can not be too clearly emphasized that the Law of Karma is very complex and of the greatest generality. For this reason it is difficult to give any explanation of such a general problem as was discussed above, without leaving much room for wide variations in different cases.

While on the one hand it is quite probable that a man who is killed in battle need not *necessarily* have owed a life to karma because of having himself taken life somewhere in his past, yet, on the other hand, it seems reasonable that in nearly all cases of death in battle it is actually true that the man is, in part at least, paying off just such a debt to the Law. While the Law is of very great generality and flexibility, it is nevertheless true that Its workings are of the utmost precision and exactitude. It works out exactly in the long run.

One of our great authorities on karma, Mr. Leadbeater, has told us that there are two kinds of karma. One kind deals with those cases where one man very decidedly affects the evolution of another, or does something which has a great influence on his life; such karma must be worked out by the appropriate direct, personal reactions. The other kind consists of a "general fund" into which are assembled all the minor unexhausted reactions, which are due to actions which are in their nature trivial. This general fund will result in discharges of both painful and pleasurable karma upon the man, without being necessarily related to the actions of others.

It is true that we must consider both personal karma and national karma, but it is not to be forgotten that national karma is made up of many personal karmas, in fact precisely those which have the characteristic mark of involving the interests of the nation as well as those of the man's personality. The ruler of a country may do actions for and in the name of his nation, but he does them personally, and he will experience the necessary reactions himself. Thus to speak of national karma does not mean that the personal element does not enter: usually it enters very strongly. The sinking of the *Lusitania* was an action which involved many national interests, but the many egos who lost their bodies in that tragedy were all undoubtedly meeting their own personal karmas, each for himself. Thus, in a battle not only is national karma worked out and also generated, but the ones who participate are all working out, and adding to, their store of personal karma.

It is very true that the importance of the physical aspect of karma is often much exaggerated. There is also karma in the world of emotions and karma in the mental world, and these karmas may often be vastly more important than the physical karmas. But there is another erroneous tendency on the part of some students of karma, and this is the belief that karma produced in one world of consciousness may be fully outworked in another world. With this idea it may be said that a man who has not taken life, or does not owe a life, may meet death in battle because of some bad astral or mental karma which he has himself generated. As a matter of fact this seems to be a very improbable and unlikely event. The different worlds, of course, are geared together mechanically in very wonderful ways, so that an action in a lower world always means a corresponding action in the higher worlds. But, on the other hand, there is also a very peculiar separation between the different worlds, which more or less completely prevents energy from passing from one world to another. This would not permit astral karma to appear and be worked out in the physical world, except under very exceptional circumstances.

To illustrate this very important point, let us consider a man who works himself into an uncontrollable rage and murders someone. The astral energy of the emotion did not pass into the physical world and result in the murder, but it remains in its own world. It did influence the physical body to act erroneously, but the energy made use of was physical energy. The murderer must at some future time experience the very painful

reaction upon him of this astral energy which he made wrong use of in the emotion of wrath. Usually this would occur, at least in part, when he finds himself in the astral world after the death of his physical body. In some other incarnation he would have to square his account in the physical world, and this would most naturally be through the loss of his physical body through some form of violence.

Now consider the same case in which the man in his rage fails to carry out the murder because of some fortunate external hindering element. In this case the man will meet with the same astral reaction, which represents the return to him of his own misused astral energy of wrath, but he will not lose his physical body because he did not take life. Karma is often very complex and usually involves all the three lower worlds, but the energies which belong to every single out-working of karma reappear in the world where they were generated.

When a man is killed, it does not usually mean that the karma is ended then and there. Ordinarily there is produced just about as much fresh karma in the average action as is exhausted of old karma. The karmic actions of two egos upon one another are generally oscillatory in character. They overbalance first on one side, then on the other. The killings probably did not start as such, but represent the climax of interactions which started in very insignificant unpleasantnesses. The karmic exchanges of hate usually continue for some time, first increasing in violence and then decreasing until they again become insignificant and finally die out altogether. It is much

like the swinging of the pendulum to and fro, where these oscillations gradually become less intense until finally the pendulum comes to rest. This is the normal outworking of antagonisms. Of course if the two enemies realise the law of forgiveness and of love, then the oscillations may be quickly ended, just as the pendulum may be soon brought to rest by some suitable damping agency, even by a small feather.

How hard it seems for humanity to learn the lesson of the Law! How difficult it is to let go of one's lower center of consciousness and work from a higher one, which at first seems to be not one's own true self! The world is full of illustrations of the law of balance and of balancing, of motion between two opposite extremes and of vibrations dying down to a state of rest. But though the men of the world see these countless illustrations of the minor law, they do not comprehend their inner meaning. They see only the outer forms and motions, and by them they are held as in bonds of steel and prevented from entering into the thought of the unseen causes of actions and motions.

What is it that human beings are constantly tempted to do by outer appearances? It is to throw themselves and their powers of will into their natural and habitual actions and motions in such a way as to increase them. But the man who would be free from the bondage and the trammels of the law of karma must act from a new point of view,—that of the universal and eternal, not the one which is personal and transitory. Man must arouse his *will*, and he must guide it from within, from his true self. C. S.

NOTES FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF JAINISM

These two questions are answered in the *Jaina Gazette* (Lucknow, India) by the Jain scholar, Mr. A. Gordon:

Is there any kind of conduct the practice of which will save us from the anxieties of this world, and by means of which we may obtain liberation?

The essence of the Jain teachings concerns conduct necessarily in order that each soul may be saved from the worries and anxieties of this mundane world. This knowledge is to be found within the six Dravyas, and the more one has a right comprehension of these truths, the sooner will the cares of this world be removed. These doctrines bring about Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct in the life of every soul who truly endeavors to carry out the precepts to be found in the Jaina Scriptures. The continual struggle to overcome all the passions, anger, greed, lust, etc., will eventually bring about liberation, which according to the Jaina is known as Moksha. This is a state of existence where no such strivings will be necessary, as all those souls who have attained to such a condition will have conquered all things pertaining to sense life. Hence the term "Jaina," meaning "to conquer." To free the soul from good as well as bad feelings and actions is the Jaina ideal in view, with the object of attaining to that most exalted state of Parmatman (God).

What is the idea of Image-worship among the Jains?

From a European point of view Idol-worship seems to have been born in India because of the fact that no other country in the world contains so many shrines dedicated to gods and goddesses under different forms, images and symbols. The Christian religion is strongly opposed to any form of idol-worship, but in its zeal for the propagation of the biblical text: "Thou shalt have none other Gods before me," the potent power embodied within the use of symbols has been entirely overlooked, yet, at the same time, its followers, in general, practise certain ritual, which fact they overlook when they so vigorously condemn the so-called idolatry of the Hindus.

FIELD NOTES

An unusually large number of membership certificates were issued for the month of December. A large number are for Holland, where several new Groups have been formed: those of Amsterdam and Zeist.

The illustrated lectures are now being frequently used by a number of the Groups. Minneapolis had an audience of one hundred for *Historic Examples of Reincarnation*.

BOOK REVIEWS

How We Remember Our Past Lives, by C. Jinarajadasa, M.A. 100 pp., Price 1/6. T. P. H., Adyar, Madras, India.

We have here a new book by this well-known lecturer and philosopher. It is a scholarly presentation of the problem of memory as shown forth in the personality, and will be regarded as a classic essay in our study of karma and reincarnation. We hope to quote some of the most valuable paragraphs in a later issue.

The Doctrine of Reincarnation in the Bible, and The Approach to the Narrow Way, by J. A. Edward Wren, B. A., 20 pp. Price, 2½d. T. P. S. 161 New Bond St, W. London, England.

This beautiful and artistic pamphlet with covers in gold, is a most helpful contribution to the study of the truth of reincarnation as it may be found in the Bible. We would recommend all our Christian members to get this pamphlet and study it carefully. It is a booklet which may be used to interest our Christian friends in the philosophy of reincarnation and karma.

The Greatest Hamlet, or The Walking of the Ghost, by J. B. Frost. The Call of the South Co., Atlanta, Ga.

The author analyses some of the deep psychological problems in Shakespeare's great tragedy with insight and understanding. The work is artistically printed and illustrated with numerous photogravures from actual stage scenes as played by Mr. Kellard and Miss Frost.

The Call of the South is a monthly magazine whose aim is to promote the literary, dramatic and moral forces of the South. May it grow in strength of service.

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